

An Introduction to Somerset
State Hospital

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Introduction To...



Somerset State Hospital



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An introduction to Somerset
State Hospital

The Department of Public Welfare provides services and referrals without regard to race, color, religious creed, handicap, ancestry, national origin, age or sex.

How Did I Get Into Somerset State Hospital?

You are here, either voluntarily or involuntarily committed under the Pennsylvania Mental Health Procedures Act (Act 143), to receive help with your mental health problems. You were referred to Somerset State Hospital by your local base service unit for Mental Health and Mental Retardation. Commitment papers, were signed by you, if you came willingly for help, or by a judge if you have been involuntarily committed. If you are here on an emergency 5-day commitment, your MH/MR county administrator or his designee signed your commitment. Whether or not you are here of your own choice, we want you to know that we are interested in you, and we will do everything we can to help you.

You are the most important person in this hospital, and the staff is here to work with you in developing a treatment plan that is designed to meet your individual needs.

What Personal Belongings Should I Bring With Me To The Hospital?

You may bring some personal belongings with you. Your wardrobe should include enough casual clothes for a week. In addition, you may want to bring a bathrobe, pajamas, slippers, toothbrush, comb and toilet articles. Because all of your clothing must be recorded and labeled with your name, it might be necessary for you to wear hospital clothing for a few days. As a practical matter, we suggest that you keep with you only things that can be replaced. Send valuable and prized possessions home if possible.

What Happens To Me During The First Few Days At The Hospital?

You will be asked to remain on your ward for the first few days. This will give your treatment team a chance to do an evaluation of your needs and to develop a treatment plan for you. Treatment plans are most effective when you, your family and our staff communicate often and freely with one another. During your first few days here, your social service worker will

be in touch with you and your family concerning your immediate needs and to schedule a meeting with them. Please encourage your family and friends to stay in contact with you and to talk with our staff. Do not hesitate to ask questions and to share your thoughts with us.

Will I Always Be In The Same Living Area And Have The Same Treatment Team?

Each living area has different programs and can offer different kinds of experiences for you. Many people leave the hospital directly from the admissions area. However, sometimes we believe that your needs can be met better on a different area and your treatment team might ask another team to accept you into their program. Of course, you may ask your team to consider you for a transfer to another area, if you wish.

How Can I Help Myself? What Do You Expect Of Me At The Hospital?

Our hospital is like a community in many ways. You are expected to contribute to the hospital community. As in society, considerations for other people and common courtesy are important. Each living area does have guidelines to follow — please ask questions when you do not understand any of these guidelines. We encourage you to accept hospital guidelines and rules, to engage in personal and group activities, to get along with other people and to manage your own affairs whenever possible.

May My Family And Friends Visit Me While I'm At The Hospital?

Yes, your family and friends are encouraged to visit you. Sometimes, special permission may be required for friends. Our staff can offer help as you are preparing to return to live in the community, but we can never replace your family and friends. Hopefully, you, those people close to you and our staff can work together toward a more satisfying life in the future.

When May People Visit Me?

Visiting hours are 1 p.m. to 8 p.m. daily. If the hours on your

living area do not suit your family's needs, please talk it over with your social service worker.

Who's Paying The Bill?

When you are admitted, our office of institutional collections will contact your family to set up an appointment to discuss the cost of hospitalization. After evaluating available income and health insurance, fees are requested at full payment, partial payment, or no payment. If you are 18 years old or older, only your income is evaluated, your family does not pay.

Suppose I Want To Buy A Soda?

The guardian office provides accounts so that you may deposit money for your own use in the hospital. The nurse on your living area will give you a paper to sign so that you may withdraw spending money from your account for soda, coffee, cigarettes, etc. You may also withdraw larger amounts for shopping trips. If you wish, people on your treatment team will be glad to talk with you about shopping in local stores.

Does The Hospital Have A Store Where I May Buy Things?

Yes, there is a canteen. It is located on the first floor of the admissions building. You may buy cigarettes, food, toilet articles, etc. in the canteen. Cigarette and food machines are available in other areas. The canteen is open 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily.

May I Send And Receive Mail?

Yes, writing material is provided for you by the hospital. Ask a member of your treatment team for them. If you do not have money to buy stamps, the hospital will pay the postage - within reason. Of course, you have the right to send any letters you wish.

Mail is delivered daily to each living area. Besides letters, you may receive newspapers, magazines, flowers and packages. Mail

to you will be delivered the fastest if the following address is used:

Somerset State Hospital, P.O. Box 631, Somerset, PA 15501. Of course, your name and living area should also be on the address.

May I Make And Receive Telephone Calls?

Yes, you are permitted to make and to receive confidential telephone calls. There is a limited number of pay phones, however, so please be thoughtful of others. If you need to make a special long-distance call, you can make arrangements to use the telephone in your social service worker's office.

What About Smoking?

Smoking regulations vary on each living area. Ask someone on your area about the times and places you may smoke.

What About Laundry?

Your clothing may be sent to the hospital laundry, however, we encourage you to do it yourself. Washers and dryers are available for your use. Ask staff on your living area for directions.

May I Go To Church?

Yes, if you wish to practice your religious beliefs, all the usual rites and services of community churches are provided in the hospital by our chaplains. Worship services are offered according to the times and places listed and placed on the bulletin board on your living area. If you want special help from a chaplain, just let your treatment team know. Of course, your own clergyman is allowed to visit with you at all times.

My Hair's A Mess!

The hospital has a beautician and barber who know how much better you feel when you look good. Since going to the beauty shop can perk you up, staff may suggest making an appointment.

Is There A Library I Can Use?

You may use the library located on the ground floor of Building #5. Books and magazines may be read or checked out or you can listen to music.

May I Watch Television Or Listen To Radio?

There are televisions on each living area. Please be thoughtful of others living with you and don't insist on watching only shows that you want. If you wish to have your own radio, we suggest a small, inexpensive, battery operated one. Radio and television are entertaining, but there are other interesting things to do. Instead of sitting all day in front of a television, you might become involved in games, sports, recreation, hobbies or talking with other people.

What Should I Do In Case Of Fire Or A Disaster?

If you ever smell smoke or see a fire, report it immediately to the nursing staff. They will turn in an alarm and give you instructions for leaving the building safely.

The fire marshal has monthly fire drills on each living area. These drills may occur on any of the three nursing shifts. Staff will instruct you about these drills.

What Are Grounds Privileges?

As you feel less need for restriction and structures, you will be encouraged to use the hospital grounds. Remember to sign out when you leave your living areas as a courtesy to the staff so that we will know where you are and when to expect your return. Please ask questions if you're not sure of where you may go.

What About Leaving The Grounds? And When May I Go On A Visit?

Your treatment team may make arrangements with you to leave the grounds sometimes, perhaps to go shopping or to go to a movie either by yourself or with other people.

When you and your team feel that you are ready for a home visit, arrangements will be made for you to leave the hospital for a day or perhaps longer. You, a member of your family or an adult friend, may make this request by calling your social worker. Requests for visits must be approved by your treatment team, so they should be made at least one week before the date of the visit.

What Happens To My Driver's License?

Your right to drive will not be suspended just because you are in the hospital. We do suggest that you ask your physician what effects your medication might have on your driving ability.

How Can Talking With Other People In The Hospital Help Me?

In your experiences at the hospital, you will learn that you have the same thoughts and feelings and fears that you had before you came to the hospital. We learn that sharing our thoughts and feelings with other people helps us to get along better, and what better person to share with than the person sitting right beside you at meals or in activities or in your living area!

What Special Medical Services Can This Hospital Offer Me?

If you need treatment for a physical problem, the hospital has many consultants. The hospital also has agreements with the local general hospitals for the provision of services.

What Do I Do If I Need Treatment Or Surgery In A General Hospital?

All treatment at general hospitals requires that you or your nearest relative sign an operation permit first. If you understand the nature of the treatment, you must sign an operative permit before treatment can begin; if not, then your nearest relative will be asked to send a telegram to the general hospital to authorize treatment for you.

When Will I Be Discharged From The Hospital?

This depends on your circumstances. Our aim is to return you to your community and home as soon as possible. Many people are able to leave directly from admissions area after a brief period of time. Others stay here for long periods of time. We encourage you to discuss your treatment program and your progress often with people on your treatment to help in your own progress and speed your return to the community.

What Actually Happens When I Leave?

Long before you leave the hospital, you will be making plans for return to the community with your team. The mental health clinic that referred you here has been in touch with your progress. Your team will discuss plans with you and with people interested in you so that any situation that seemed to be a problem before you came into the hospital can now be solved.

Many people return to their homes and families. Sometimes, people wish to live independently. They may visit with their families from time to time, but still live their own lives. When you leave the hospital, you should take all of your personal belongings with you. Your team will help you to arrange for money and to get re-established in the community, if you wish.

What Is Follow-Up Treatment?

When you leave the hospital, we recommend that you visit the county MH/MR base service unit in your local area. They offer a wide variety of counseling and referral services. The MH/MR clinics are important in coordinating follow-up planning and treatment for you. The base service units for the MH/MR clinics associated with our hospital are in the following locations:

Somerset/Bedford Counties

Somerset County 814-443-4891	330 S. Kimberly Avenue Somerset, PA 15501
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Bedford/Somerset Counties

Bedford County 814-623-5166	R.D. #5, Box 349 Bedford, PA 15522
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Blair County 814-946-2141	Altoona Hospital Howard Ave., & 7th St. Altoona, PA 16601
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Cambria County 814-535-6548	415 Main Street Johnstown, PA 15901
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Fayette County 412-437-0729	100 New Salem Road Uniontown, PA 15401
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These MH/MR clinics are involved not only with follow-up treatment, but also with many community mental health services. For information, feel free to call any of the base service units listed above. The MH/MR staff are available to help with problems you may be having and to assist you in helping someone you care about.

Patients Bill Of Rights

**You Have A Right To Be Treated
With Dignity and Respect**

**You Shall Retain All Civil Rights
That Have Not Been Specifically Curtailed By
Order of Court**

1. You have the right to unrestricted and private communication inside and outside this facility including the rights:
 - a. To peacefully assemble and to join with other patients to organize a body of or participate in patient government when patient government has been determined to be feasible by the facility;
 - b. To be assisted by any advocate of your choice in the assertion of your rights and to see a lawyer in private at any time;
 - c. To make complaints and to have your complaints heard and adjudicated promptly;

- d. To receive visitors of your choice at reasonable hours unless the treatment team has determined in advance that a visitor or visitors would seriously interfere with treatment;
 - e. To receive and send unopened letters and to have outgoing letters stamped and mailed. Incoming mail may be examined for good reason in your presence for contraband. Contraband means specific property which entails a threat to your health and welfare or to the hospital community; and
 - f. To have access to telephones designated for patients' use.
2. You have the right to practice the religion of your choice or to abstain from religious practices.
 3. You have the right to keep and to use personal possessions, unless it has been determined that specific personal property is contraband. The reasons for imposing limitation and its scope must be clearly defined, recorded and explained to you. You have the right to sell any personal article you make and keep the proceeds from its sale.
 4. You have the right to handle your personal affairs, including making contracts, holding a driver's license or professional license, marrying or obtaining a divorce and writing a will.
 5. You have the right to participate in the development and review of your treatment plan.
 6. You have the right to receive treatment in the least restrictive setting within the facility necessary to accomplish the treatment goals.
 7. You have the right to be discharged from the facility as soon as you no longer need care and treatment.
 8. You have the right not to be subject to any harsh or unusual treatment.
 9. If you have been involuntarily committed in accordance with civil court proceedings and you are not receiving treatment, and you are not dangerous to yourself or others, and you can survive safely in the community, you have the right to be discharged from the facility.
 10. You have the right to be paid for any work you do which benefits the operation and maintenance of the facility in accordance with existing Federal Wage and Hour Regulations.

Be Aware of the Following:

1. On each ward there is a written notice stating the procedure to be used when a person feels his rights have been infringed upon and wishes to file a complaint.
2. The **first step** in a rights complaint involves the **treatment team and patient**. Most problems can be resolved at this level.
3. If the problem is **not resolved**, the superintendent of the hospital is contacted, along with the chairperson of the Patients' Rights Committee.
4. A subcommittee of the Patients' Rights Committee will contact the patient, initiate the inquiry and meet with staff members or other patients, if required.
5. The inquiry is always initiated within 24 hours.
6. All information recorded is confidential.
7. If the committee suspects abuse, the facts are given to the superintendent for further action.

PATIENT RESPONSIBILITIES

During your stay in this facility, to the extent you are able, you are responsible for meeting certain responsibilities. These responsibilities are as follows:

1. It shall be your responsibility to cooperate with your treatment staff to benefit from the highest standards of medical and psychiatric care;
2. It shall be your responsibility to participate in formulating and following your individualized comprehensive treatment plan and to attend assigned treatment programs;
3. It shall be your responsibility to cooperate in taking medication and to follow diets and therapeutic routines as prescribed by your physician;
4. It shall be your responsibility to let staff know whether or not you understand what is expected of you;
5. It shall be your responsibility to follow the rules and regulations of this hospital affecting patient care and conduct;
6. It shall be your responsibility to always be considerate of the rights and privileges of other patients and staff;
7. It shall be your responsibility to respect the property of other patients, staff and of this facility, and to refrain from damaging or destroying such property;

8. If you refuse any prescribed course of treatment or do not follow the instructions of your physician, you shall be responsible for your own actions;
9. It shall be your responsibility to restrict your outdoor walking to the approved areas of the hospital grounds, as described to you in your orientation regarding the use of a grounds privilege card;
10. It shall be your responsibility to keep yourself, your room, activity areas, etc., neat and clean. Staff will provide assistance as necessary. Cleaning these areas is not considered peonage; and
11. It shall be your responsibility, where applicable, to assure that the financial obligations of your health care are met and to seek staff assistance in these matters when needed.

IMPORTANT HOSPITAL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Hospital Number	(814) 445-6501	Extension
Superintendent		204
Chairman Patient Rights		454
Asst. Superintendent/SRS Director		341

ADMISSIONS

The provision of services and referrals of patients to Somerset State Hospital are made without regard to race, color, religious creed, handicap, ancestry, national origin, age or sex. Program services are accessible to eligible handicapped persons through the most practical and economical methods available.

Any patient who believes he has been discriminated against may file a complaint of discrimination with any of the following:

1. Affirmative Action Officer
Somerset State Hospital
Personnel Department
Room 183, Administration Building
(814) 445-6501/Ext. 233
2. Department of Public Welfare
Bureau of Civil Rights Central Compliance Office
Room 414, Health & Welfare Building
P.O. Box 2675
Harrisburg, PA 17105-2675
Telephone (717) 787-1146; Network: 447-1146
(within 90 days of incident)

Telephone (717) 787-1146; Network: 447-1146
(within 90 days of incident)

3. PA Human Relations Commission

101 South Second Street
Suite 300
Harrisburg, PA 17105
Phone: 717-787-4410
(within 180 days of incident)

4. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Federal Building
1000 Library Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
(412) 644-3444
(within 300 days of incident)

5. State Civil Service Commission

Executive Director
State Street Building
P.O. Box 569
Harrisburg, PA 17105
Phone 717-787-3094
(within 20 days of incident)

6. Department of Health and Human Services


Office for Civil Rights, Region III
3535 Market Street
P.O. Box 13716
Philadelphia, PA 19101
Phone: 215-596-1267
TDD: 215-596-6794
(within 180 days of incident)

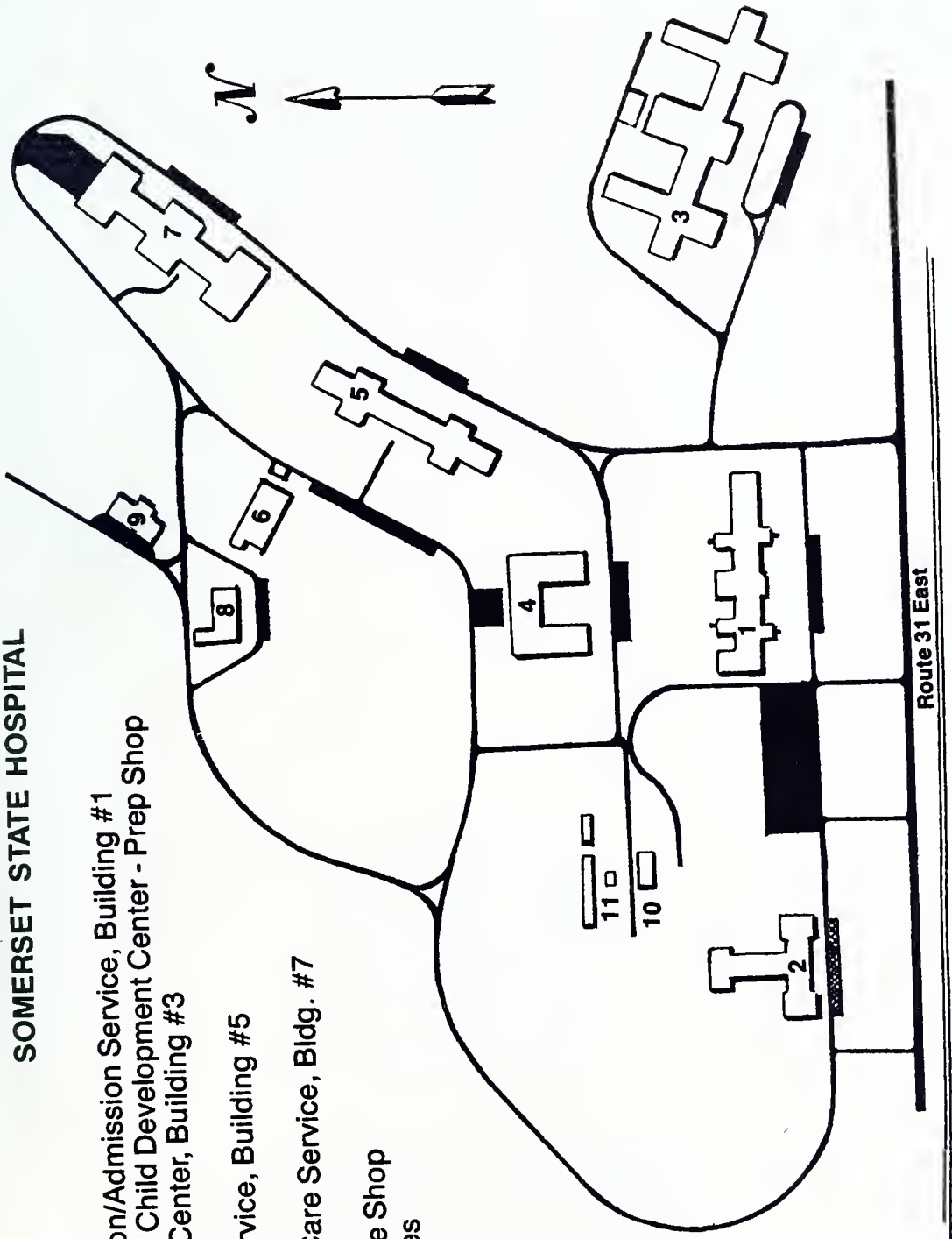
7. Pennsylvania Protection and Advocacy

116 Pine Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101
Phone: 1-800-692-7443 or
1-800-238-6222

SOMERSET STATE HOSPITAL

1. Administration/Admission Service, Building #1
2. Building #2 - Child Development Center - Prep Shop
3. Habilitation Center, Building #3
4. Dietary
5. Geriatric Service, Building #5
6. Laundry
7. Continued Care Service, Bldg. #7
8. Power Plant
9. Maintenance Shop
10. Greenhouses

 Parking





Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Robert P. Casey, Governor
Department of Public Welfare
John F. White, Jr., Secretary



